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ANNUAL REPORT

1932

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

John R. White, Superintendent,
Sequoia National Park, California.

GENERAL PROBLEMS

Several projects which vitally affect development of the Sequoia National Park are now nearing completion: the State Approach Road from Visalia has been steadily improved during past years, and the ten mile section through the foothills from Lemon Cove to Three Rivers is being entirely relocated on modern highway standards; the Ridge Route, on the Golden State Highway between San Joaquin Valley points and Los Angeles, is being relocated, and next year the park will be an hour nearer to Southern California points. Within the past ten years, travel time to the Sequoia National Park has been cut as follows: from Los Angeles in 1922, from nine to ten hours - today or shortly, from five to six hours. From Visalia to Giant Forest in 1922, from three to four hours - today or soon, about one and a half. The Sequoia National Park is the nearest national park to the great metropolitan and tourist center of Southern California; is receiving increased patronage from that area, and will be much more heavily patronized as soon as highway projects now under way are completed.

The Generals' Highway between Sequoia and General Grant National Parks, which has been under construction since 1928, has now been built for 16.922 miles of the total distance of 29.239, leaving 12.317 miles to be built, of which all but about three miles are under contract or will soon be contracted. If funds are made available, this magnificent highway should be open to the public in 1934.

The Generals' Highway connects at General Grant National Park with the State Highway now being built into the Yosemite of the Kings River Canyon. This road has already been constructed for ten miles beyond General Grant Park, and has opened views of the Kings River Canyon comparable with the famous Inspiration Point view of Yosemite National Park. The section of this highway already opened is attracting heavy travel, and when the inter-park road is completed it is safe to predict a tremendous increase of travel both to Sequoia and to General Grant. In fact, the two parks will be virtually one park, as the fine highway between them may easily be driven in less than an hour.

PARK EXTENSION PROBLEMS

The Sequoia and General Grant National Parks were created 42 years ago, and of course without any reference to modern conditions of road and travel. In 1926, a partial extension of Sequoia National Park was made to include the upper Kern and Kaweah watersheds; but the Mineral King area was left like a dagger thrust into the heart of the park. Between Sequoia and General Grant is the finest forest of Sequoia gigantea outside a national park, and largely in private ownership - Redwood Canyon. Just beyond General Grant Park is the Kings River Canyon and its

hinterland, an area which Congress has several times considered as a national park, and which is the finest of any area in the country now under consideration as a national park. The extension of the Sequoia National Park to include the Kings River Canyon region was the project nearest to the heart of those great conservationists, John Muir and Stephen T. Mather; but conflicting interests have, as yet, made it impracticable to give national park status to the area.

It was possible to postpone many of these problems as long as this section of the Sierra was undeveloped by roads or by modern trails; but recent and prospective construction will soon compel action either in one direction or the other.

ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

The growth of Sequoia National Park has resulted in a vast increase of administrative work, yet there has been no increase in the administrative force since May, 1929, and employees have been worked to the point of breakdown. At a time when the five day week and six hour day are being put into effect, administrative employees have been working 10 and 12 hours a day, and seven days a week. At the same time their pay has been reduced.

The permanent administrative force is seven with the Assistant Superintendent. This force, with seasonal increase only of telephone operators and storehouse assistants, handled this year:

Bids, contracts, orders, vouchers, and checks for disbursements totaling $534,138.56, for Sequoia and General Grant Parks;

Bookkeeping and cost reports (including daily reports from June 1 to September 30 for Sequoia) for both parks;

Preparation of annual estimates and Six Year Plan, both parks;

Time-keeping records up to 275 employees;

Extensive Civil Service correspondence and reports, including Local Civil Service Board activities, both parks;

Collection, reporting, and deposit of revenues approximating $35,000 annually;

Extensive mimeograph service of press releases, nature bulletins, and local park orders and memoranda;

Operating 2 telephone exchanges, one all year and one 6 months, service from 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. daily;

Issuing $61,000 of supplies from storehouse and thousands of dollars worth of equipment to over 40 stations;

Miscellaneous correspondence on all subjects, reports, statistics, plans, employees' compensation, files, information, etc.

TRAVEL

At a time when resorts up and down the Sierra and throughout California were closing their doors or barely struggling along, the Sequoia National Park has shown only an 8.4% loss in travel, and this loss was at least partly, perhaps half of it,

due to bad weather and road conditions during winter, spring and early summer. A total of 125,764 visitors entered in 40,820 cars. By trails and other transportation 5,634 visitors came in, making a total of 131,398 visitors.

	1932		1931		Percent of
	Cars	Visitors	Cars	Visitors	Loss or Gain
Ash Mt. Entrance	37,286	116,721	40,787	127,527	-8.4
Mineral King Entrance	3,534	9,298	3,834	9,652	-3.6
Trail Entrances	-----	5,379	-----	6,394	-15.8

ORIGIN OF TRAVEL

	1932	1931
Northern California	5.2%	5.1%
Southern California	25.2	21.5
San Joaquin Valley	62.7	67.0
Out of State and Foreign	6.9	6.4

Trail Travel

A most encouraging feature in park travel is the increasing use of trails, particularly of those near Giant Forest, to such scenic or interest points as Moro Rock, Tharp Log, Congress Group, Alta Trail, Big Trees, Sunset Rock, Admiration Point (Marble Falls). Trail registers have been placed at several points, and although it is safe to say that not more than 50% of people register, one or two records show:

Moro Rock	8,297 visitors
Tharp Log	4,782 visitors
Congress Grove	2,357 visitors

Trail travel to the high mountains is also increasing despite the fact that the depression has affected the business of large pack parties, composed usually of wealthy men. More small parties with burros or a few mules explored and camped in the back country this year than ever before, despite the late opening of the high mountain passes. Travel to the summit of Mt. Whitney was delayed until August, but the new trails to the summit have been heavily used since they were opened. A total of 644 visitors registered at the summit this year, as compared with 791 in 1931.

Winter Travel

The period from October 1 to April 30 is considered the slack time in travel, yet during that period 10,988 cars brought 35,796 visitors into the park. Approximately 17,000 visitors enjoyed the winter sports under the Big Trees. Toboggan slide, "can" slide and ski slides and snowshoe trails were developed and maintained by the rangers at Giant Forest.

Although winter sports attracted many, perhaps the greater number of winter visitors came to see the sequoia forests in winter uniform of red and white. The Big Trees are particularly impressive when seen above a carpet of snow, and there is a growing demand for opportunity to see them in winter, and for winter accommodations.

Special Parties

Both the Sierra and California Alpine Clubs had their summer outings in the park, spending from two weeks to a month in the back-country. Park officers received many compliments on account of the condition of the trails, meadows, campsites, and arrangements made for the parties.

The Fox Film Corporation had a company of over 100 people at Giant Forest for several weeks filming "Wild Girl". Among several stars were Charles Farrell, Joan Bennett, Irving Pichel, Ralph Bellamy, Gene Pallette, under the direction of Raoul Walsh.

PROTECTION

The Protection Department consists of a Chief Ranger and Assistant Chief Ranger and eight Rangers, or total of 10 permanent men, assisted during the summer by 9 temporary rangers, 2 night watchmen and 6 fire control men.

Special activities during the year were: 400 miles of snow patrol on ski, making snow survey and winter patrols; information of great value to valley irrigationists was secured. The survey was made in cooperation with the State Division of Water Resources.

During February and March the whole Ranger Force was busy on rescue and search for two missing Army pilots lost over the park in a blizzard. One was rescued and the body of the other and the airplane discovered after two months search.

There were 150,000 trout fry planted during the year.

The Mather Memorial Plaque was installed at a ceremony attended by several hundred people.

The Ranger Manual was revised and a start made in preparing a general park manual of information and instruction.

The Fire Prevention organization was further strengthened and organized. The park now has three Lookouts manned during hazardous season, about May to October. Much preventive work remains to be done, and one big fire may cost more than the allotments for several years on fire prevention. But even with present partial organization and protection, the record for the past four years, 1929 - 1932, is 49 fires and only 335 acres burned, or an average of 6.8 acres per fire.

CONSTRUCTION

Major Roads: Project 1D-2 was completed during the year, and approximately 10 miles of the Generals' Highway from Giant Forest towards General Grant Park are now open to travel.

Contract work began on Project 1D-3, a job of 2.2 miles.

On the park approach road, the contract from Baldy Ridge to the northwest park boundary near Hidden Grove was nearly finished at the end of September, 1932.

A contract is now under way for surfacing and improvement of the 11 miles of Generals' Highway from Hospital Rock to Giant Forest, and this winter for the first time there will be a surfaced road to Giant Forest.

As the Generals' Highway between the parks nears completion, thought must be given to other park road needs, particularly to circulating secondary roads to scenic and camping places, so that the vast volume of traffic over the major highway may be distributed to best advantage. Consideration must also be given to a new approach road to Giant Forest on easy grades up the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River. Such a road involves some of the most serious landscape and administrative problems that have confronted the Service in any National Park, and careful study is being made of the several possibilities.

Trail Construction: Construction on the High Sierra Trail from Giant Forest to Mount Whitney is nearing completion, and large sections of it were used by the public this year. Sixteen and a half miles of high class trail were built during the year, including a 125 foot suspension bridge over the Hamilton Lake Chimney.

Nearly 200 members of the Sierra Club traversed the completed sections of the High Sierra Trail this year, and they unanimously declared that the scenery opened up is the finest in the whole Sierra Nevada. The magnificent domes, cliffs and pinnacles of the River Valley-Hamilton Lake region, fully equal to the far-famed Yosemite itself, have been brought within four or five hours easy riding from Giant Forest.

The High Sierra Trail is the first high class trail to be flung across the Sierra Nevada, and it traverses the choicest of Sierran scenery. It is unexcelled, if it is equalled, by any trail in America.

Many new problems of conservation of meadows and scenery, and provision of camping places, are involved by the construction of this trail.

From emergency funds allotted in August, we are completing the Tokopah Bridge and approaches at Lodgepole Camp; $5,000; placing new spans and improving approaches to Marble Fork Bridge, $7,000; grading and surfacing Giant Forest Village Plaza and adjacent highway, $8,000; and landscaping $2,000

MISCELLANEOUS CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

The General Foreman and seven permanent employees have handled all the miscellaneous construction and maintenance work, with a seasonal increase to a maximum of 131 per diem employees.

The principal achievements of the past year have been: 62 miles of road maintained; 110,349 gallons of oil applied; 9-1/2 miles of highway oil processed and other roads dust oiled. Snow removed from 5 to 13 miles at a cost of $1,290. Slide removal owing to heavy winter, $11,600; 30 miles metallic and 160 miles of grounded telephone lines maintained and improved; 3 residence cabins and 2 comfort stations built for $11,578.27. Additions and improvements of quarters, $2,800. Extension Wolverton water system, 8700 feet steel pipe, new reservoir and increase emergency storage, etc. $13,800. Sewer extensions and disposal plant improvements, $2,950. Lodgepole Camp layout finished $9,500. Public campfire and bear feeding grounds, $500.

Work now under way or nearing completion is: Giant Forest Village comfort station, $2,275; ranger cabin Lodgepole Camp, $3,695; messhall, new utility area, $4,000; water to Colony Mill station, miscellaneous water and sewer connections, $2,700.

Lack of equipment is still a handicap to economical construction and maintenance. Our chief needs are: a half yard gas shovel; a Rotary Snow-plow; dump trucks and tractors.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

Park Naturalist Frank Been was assisted by two temporary naturalists, a museum attendant and janitor, and one or two laborers when assigned. Despite handicap of lack of personnel and a slight decrease in travel, there was a marked increase in educational contacts. Three campfire programs were maintained, and the Giant Forest and Lodgepole Campfires have been immensely popular, always attended by hundreds of visitors. The weekly schedule included five all day, six half day hikes, and an auto caravan daily except Sunday. Three lectures were given daily at points of interest, and additional Sunday lectures.

The Tulare County branch library was maintained and extended, and a reading room in connection was installed and proved immensely popular. The museum was maintained, but could not be expanded owing to lack of space. Exhibits of live snakes and reptiles were made.

Several special lecturers were secured for campfire programs; and at night astronomy lectures were given on Sunset or Moro Rocks.

The Huckleberry Meadow squatter's cabin was restored and remodeled as a trailside museum. Special exhibits were maintained at Tharp Log and Moro Rock.

The park library of reference works was systematized, indexed, and expanded. Additional lantern slides were secured and lectures prepared.

The Park Naturalist made several traveling exhibits of the park, featuring sequoia sections, photographs, tree specimens, etc., which were shown at various tourist and travel centers in Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley, and attracted favorable attention and large crowds.

The Park Naturalist organized the highly interesting program for the Mather Dedication on July 10, 1932, and which was attended by Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society and many other distinguished persons. He also represented the Park Service at several meetings or functions throughout California.

Considering the small allotment, only $4,022.53 for all educational personnel and work, Park Naturalist Been made remarkable progress during the past year.

FORESTRY DIVISION

Only $2,044.24 was available for all the forestry and reforestation work in this greatest of all forests parks. Yet under Acting Forester Been, considerable progress was made.

Nursery Work

1. A new lath house was built of salvaged lumber.

2. A portable cabin was assigned as workshop and store room.

3. Compost bins were constructed and filled with compost.

4. 630 trees were received from Devil Canyon Nursery.

5. We procured 300 incense cedars by digging from places of excessive natural seeding.

6. Many species of trees, shrubs and flowers native to the park were grown in numbers adequate for landscaping and forest planting purposes.

7. From nearby canneries 4,000 tin cans were procured for transplanting.

8. Two forms for permanent nursery record were prepared - one for nursery planting record and the other for planting stock distribution record.

9. Gathered seeds, cuttings, and slips of many species of plants.

Landscaping and forest planting:

1. The grounds of the new Ash Mountain permanent residence, and the Park Naturalist's residence, were graded and planted.

2. The Ash Mountain administrative area was planted and the park entrance landscaped.

3. In Giant Forest miscellaneous planting was done; further efforts were made to landscape General Sherman Tree, and additional tourist barrier was placed just inside the guard rail; and watering and spraying with deer repellent of planted trees and shrubbery was done.

4. From the Ash Mt. Nursery 400 yellow pine were planted as a reforestation project on the Mehrten Creek forest fire area.

5. False hellebore was largely eradicated in Round Meadow, and resulted in a noticeable spread of attractive wild flowers; a start was made in controlling this plant in Crescent Meadow; poison oak was pretty well eliminated in the foothill campgrounds by spraying, and puncture vine was destroyed by pulling and burning wherever it was found.

Continued efforts were made on bark beetle control, but inadequate funds have resulted in incomplete results in every case except at Lodgepole Camp, where the work was successfully accomplished two years ago and now demands only maintenance. The year has revealed a marked increase in beetle killed trees in spite of work of the past two years. This is because the control projects were only partly finished, resulting in waste of money and much destruction of trees by beetles which might have been avoided by more systematic use of funds. Last spring, partially completed control projects were carried on in the Marble Fork-North Fork area, and in the Horse Creek-Hockett Meadow area. Both these areas merit attention this fall. In the fall of 1931, a strip cruise and type map was made of the Horse Creek - Hockett Meadow area so that control work the following spring was greatly aided, particularly because treating was done on deep snow. This map and others made each year will give an accurate check on control work.

PUBLIC OPERATORS

Considering the general economic conditions, the public operators did a fairly good business and ended the season with only 13.8% loss in revenue under last year. There were few complaints, and these were promptly adjusted. The Lindley Eddy Studios sold out to the Park Studios, owned by Howard H. Hays, G. L. Mauger, and O. K. Morton, who are the principal officers of the Sequoia and General Grant National Parks Company. Only minor expansion of facilities were made; but there is now need for some expansion of facilities, particularly in Lodgepole Camp where a branch store and service station, with auto camp accommodations, would probably prove successful and are needed.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although development in the Sequoia National Park has been comparatively rapid in the past ten or twelve years, it is clear that with new highway and other construction, the development of the next five or ten years will be much more rapid. The most urgent need of the park is for additional funds and personnel for mapping, planning, reforestation and restoration, conservation and landscaping. Millions have been spent for highway development during the past ten years; but pitifully few hundreds or thousands for conservation and landscaping.

Another great need is for additional administrative personnel to enable the superintendent to devote himself, particularly during the summer months, to general supervision and inspection, rather than to many details which he is now compelled to handle.

We are still handicapped by lack of funds for expansion and improvement of public campgrounds, for purchase of urgently needed equipment, and for sanitation. Evil smelling pit toilets are still the only ones in the great Lodgepole Camp, where over 1,000 persons have been camped at one time during the height of the season, and where the average population from June to September is 486.

The complete transfer of the government utility group from Giant Forest to Lodgepole is a crying need, but so far we have only received funds to build a mess-hall, which alone will be almost useless.

The Ranger Force, particularly in summer personnel, is undermanned compared with other National Parks, and an increase of personnel is an urgent need.

But despite lack of funds and many difficulties of administration, the Sequoia National Park has had a successful year; it has a fine, young, and enthusiastic personnel in every department, and all look forward to the future with pleasant anticipations and optimism.